

Afghanistan *Freedom* Watch

April 3, 2006

Combined - Afghanistan



Soldiers complete ANA training

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Air Force Senior Airman Steven Cherry prepares to change the radar antenna in the nose of a C-130 Hercules. Cherry is assigned to the 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron as an avionics specialists. He is deployed here from Kulis Air National Guard, Alaska.

Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Redente
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs.

Cover: Afghan National Army soldiers stand in formation before their graduation from the Kabul Military Training Center.

Photo by Army Spc. James Tamez
19th Public Affairs Detachment

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Afghanistan Freedom Watch

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan

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Secretary of the Army visits troops in Afghanistan

By Army

Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste
19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Francis J. Harvey, the secretary of the Army, visited Soldiers here March 22.

Harvey said the purpose of his visit was to see policies he and higher-ranking officials at the Pentagon put into action, and to ensure troops are properly equipped and trained.

"Senior leaders in the

Pentagon, in particular in the Army like myself, should go out and ensure that the needs of both commanders and Soldiers are being met. That's why I'm here doing that first-hand. That's the fundamental purpose of this visit,"

Harvey said.

Harvey got to hear how Soldiers are doing during a brief question-and-answer session with troops at the Viper Dining Facility here.

"One thing I did learn was that, and I think that this is terrain related, is that the power steering pumps on the Humvees are wearing out at a rate that appears, to me, to be unusually high," Harvey said. "That's a piece of information I would have never gotten otherwise. I heard that from a (vehicle mechanic) during the question-and-answer session. Those are the types of things I like to hear and learn."

"Just being with Soldiers lets you know how they're doing and that they're being taken care of. That's how I find out that our words at the Pentagon are becoming actions," Harvey said.

"He seems genuinely con-



Army Command Sgt. Maj. Ralph Borja, the command sergeant major of the 10th Mountain Infantry Division, listens to Francis Harvey, secretary of the Army, discuss the concerns of Soldiers with troops during a breakfast at Viper Dining Facility here.

See VISIT, Page 4

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week



Afghan cultural tidbit

Congratulations

Dari

Tabriq
(tah-bree-ck)

Pashtu

Mu baraksha
(moo-bah-rock-shaw)

Afghan music, once banned by the Taliban but readily available on tape in Afghan communities in the United States, is very popular. Both genders dance the atan, a national dance in which dancers with arms raised twist from side to side at the waists as they step in a slow, rhythmic pattern around a circle.

Afghans build bridge to future in Nuristan

Story and photo by
Air Force Staff Sgt.

Marti D. Ribeiro

Combined Joint Task Force -
76 Public Affairs

N A N G A R E S H ,
Afghanistan -- Coalition forces and Afghan workers held a ribbon-cutting ceremony here March 20 to mark progress on a bridge that will ease travel and boost commerce in Nuristan Province.

Construction of the Titin Bridge, which is scheduled for completion in July, is part of a plan to connect western and central Nuristan. Transportation has been a challenge in the province, which is domi-



An Afghan worker, left, stands with Army Lt. Col. Anthony Feagin, Engineer Azziz and Illario, an interpreter, as Feagin cuts a ribbon commemorating progress on construction of the Titin Bridge. Feagin is commander of the Mehtar Lam Provincial Reconstruction Team.

nated by three large valleys.

"Right now, people must leave western Nuristan and travel through three separate provinces to get to central Nuristan," said Army Maj. Ronald S. Riggs, an engineer

with the Mehtar Lam Provincial Reconstruction Team in Laghman Province.

Nearly 200 workers were hired to complete the first phase of the bridge project: cutting roads into rocky moun-

tainsides. Now that the roads can carry heavy traffic, the bridge-building can begin.

"The significance of this bridge is monumental," Lt. Col. Anthony Feagin, the Mehtar Lam PRT commander, said at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"This bridge symbolizes the effort by the Afghan people to step into the future, making their lives better," he continued, noting that villagers from western Nuristan can now travel quickly into central Nuristan to sell their goods.

"What used to take days to weeks to accomplish will only take a few hours after the bridge is complete."

Legal office plans U.S. citizenship workshop

Freedom Watch staff

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Many people from all over the world dream of becoming American citizens. Among them are a large number of service members who bear arms for the United States even though they are not citizens.

To help make their citizenship dreams come true, the client services office will hold a U.S. citizenship workshop April 7 at the Old Chapel here.

Citizenship is important for a variety of reasons, said Capt. Paul Bouchard, chief

of the client services office.

"Citizenship can affect a service member's ability to apply for many state and federal jobs, hold certain security clearances and vote," Bouchard said.

His office is committed to helping troops secure these benefits, Bouchard said.

Applicants will have their photographs and fingerprints taken, and obtain assistance in completing the naturalization application. All workshop services will be free of charge if they qualify, he said.

Service members currently on active duty qualify to

apply for American citizenship.

However, to obtain citizenship, troops must have served at least one year on active duty after September 11, 2002, he said.

The purpose of the seminar is to make sure troops know these services are available while serving abroad, even in a deployed environment.

"Service members can now take the citizenship exam, interview and oath of allegiance at various overseas locations," he said. "In fact, a citizenship swearing-in ceremony is planned around

August here at Bagram Airfield."

All applicants must provide their alien registration card, five-year employment and residence history, alien registration numbers of their noncitizen children, and evidence of military service.

Male service members must have a selective service number and the date of their registration.

"We encourage commanders to provide leave and transportation to those who qualify for this process and wish to attend the seminar."

For more information, call 231-4603.

VISIT, from Page 3

cerned with what Soldiers have to say," said Army Sgt. Jason Shade, a bandsman with the 10th Mountain Division Band, of Harvey.

Shade said he was impressed by what he saw as sincerity in Harvey's answers

to the questions.

"We're used to politicians and bureaucrats giving us cookie-cutter answers, but he was very honest and straight forward," Shade said.

Besides being impressed with Harvey's honesty, Shade said he also was pleased that Harvey felt visiting troops

here was important.

"I think it was great the secretary of the Army took time out of his busy schedule to visit us in Afghanistan," Shade said.

Taking time out of a busy schedule to check on Soldiers' well-being is just one way Harvey accomp-

lishes his job.

"As the secretary of the Army, my objective is to make sure we have a fully-resourced Army. A fully manned, a fully equipped and fully trained Army," Harvey said. "That's the direction we're on, and the quicker we get to that, the better."

Ground breaks for new Shibar police station

By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry
19th Public Affairs Detachment

SHIBAR, Afghanistan -- Two pieces of construction equipment roared to life and began moving earth March 20 in Bamiyan Province's Shibar District. Although people passing by may only see an empty field at this point, in the near future, the space will be occupied by a new police station.

"I want them to see it as a future focal point for their police, as well as a future for the stability and security of their region," said New Zealand Army Capt. Neville Mosley, engineering officer with the 2nd Engineer Regiment assigned to the Bamiyan Provincial Reconstruction Team, the unit overseeing the project.

The new police station will provide Shibar District with a central point for their law enforcement officers.

"It's definitely going to be a good thing for the community ... and it's certainly a start for the Shibar police to be able to do some proper police work in the region," Mosley said.

What this will provide is a station in the region that will continue some of the good training taking place in central Bamiyan Province, and it will also increase safety and stability within Shibar District, he added.

The government in Bamiyan recently identified the site of the future center for Shibar District, specifically a spot for the police station.

The PRT began leveling the ground March 19 in preparation for the contractors to come in and build the police station, Mosley said.

The building will consist of six working offices, four cells, a store room, armory, conference room, reception room and questioning room. The station also will have a kitchen and a sleeping



Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

Construction workers break ground on the site of the future police station in Shibar District on March 20.

facility for eight people.

"Construction of the police station will begin in about one-to-two weeks time," Mosley said.

The station will be complete in about six months, he added.

New Zealand Army Cpl. Kevin Whiteman, 2nd Engineer Regiment, said he is proud to be a part of the construction process.

"It's important to have a station here because this is the main route from Bamiyan to Kabul," Whiteman said.

Whiteman said he believes the Shibar police presence will help reduce traffic issues along the route.

The new police station is going to help keep peace in the country, he added.

Enduring Voices

What woman do you admire most?



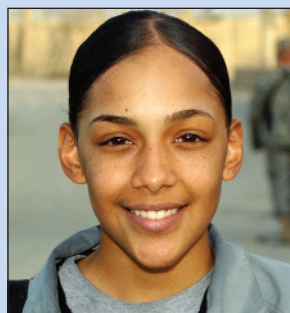
**Air Force Staff Sgt.
Christina Anabwani**
755th Engineer Battalion

"Condoleezza Rice. She isn't scared to say what she believes."



**Army Spc.
Patrick Wright**
37th Engineer Battalion

"My mom. Mom taught me how to be tough and how to deal with people."



**Army Pvt.
Emily Medina**
3rd Battalion, 10th Aviation Brigade

"Rosa Parks. She made a major change."



**Army Capt.
Michael Bobinis**
50th Personnel Services Battalion

"Queen Elizabeth."

Relief falls from sky in Zardkamr Valley

By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry
19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAMIYAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- New Zealanders of the Bamiyan Provincial Reconstruction Team and hundreds of Afghans gathered in the Zardkamr Valley in northwestern Bamiyan to watch six large bundles of relief supplies fall from the sky March 21.

The bundles, which plunged to the earth from an Air Force C-130 Hercules, were a part of a combat delivery system drop operation conducted by the PRT defense force.

"We patrol hundreds of villages, so after a while it becomes reasonably easy to determine who is worse off," said New Zealand Army Maj. Jason Healee, patrol commander for Kiwi Team 1. Healee is assigned to the Royal New Zealand Corps of Signalers.

Although Healee said he recognizes that the people of Afghanistan are struggling as a whole, the three villages of Ladu, Nal Shiva and Darrehye Darvazeh in Yekawlang District are deemed to be suffering extreme hardship.

"Typically the valleys that are like this, that are high altitude, have roads restricted by the snow ... that restricts (residents)



Photos by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

Afghans pick up relief supplies dropped by the Bamiyan Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Zardkamr Valley on March 21.

from health and education facilities, and limits their access to shops and bazaars," said Healee, who has been involved in two previous drops.

The people have health problems. They face starvation. Just general survival is difficult, he added.

To better equip the people for survival, the bundles contained food like beans,

rice, sugar, tea and salt. They also contained gear like blankets, jackets, clothing and footwear, and fuel resources like stoves, coal and wood.

Getting the relief supplies to the Afghans was a combined effort by the PRT and the shura, a formal gathering, from the three villages.

A PRT patrol visited the local leaders about two weeks before the drop to coordinate the event.

"We had to negotiate a drop zone, a piece of land that was ideal for everybody because, in this case, it's a shared environment," Healee said.

The patrol also requested crowd-control assistance from the local leaders.

Many people gathered for the drop, Healee said. The local government helped keep things orderly. The shura also controlled the distribution process.

"We encourage them to manage it themselves. ... It reinforces their position, their appointment as the village leader or head of council," Healee said.

It makes the local government more self-sufficient. If there is a problem with distribution, the locals go to the shura to resolve the issue, not the PRT, he added.

However, the PRT will send a patrol out



(Above) An Air Force C-130 Hercules plane drops relief supplies in Bamiyan on March 21.

(Left) New Zealand Army Pvt. Kyle Ellison inspects food, blankets and stoves dropped during a civic-assistance mission March 21. Ellison is with the Bamiyan Provincial Reconstruction Team.

see DROP, Page 7

Afghan women look forward to new role

Story and photo

by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry
19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAMIYAN, Afghanistan -- A group of Afghan women stepped into a new role in their community after graduating from the Bamiyan University Community Midwifery Education Program here March 19.

Twenty-two women from the Bamiyan Province were honored for completing 18 months of midwifery training in a ceremony that included family, friends and members of the Bamiyan and Afghan government.

"This graduation is symbolic of the progress that Afghanistan has made toward stability and peace," said Ali Mowji, representative for the Aga Khan Development Network.

The skills these women have made them invaluable to the country, he added.

Mary Dowglass, chief executive officer of Aga Khan Health Service - Afghanistan, explained the importance of the training the midwives received.

"When women are giving birth, when they are sick, when they are looking after their newborn, ... they need to be cared for by other women with good skills," Dowglass said.

During the many years of war in Afghanistan, care during labor, delivery and post-delivery declined because so few women became trained health professionals, she said.

As a result, one-in-five women in Bamiyan died from childbirth complications.

As more women attend and graduate midwife programs, officials hope that



Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

New midwives sing their national anthem during graduation from the Bamiyan University Community Midwifery Education Program on March 19. Officials said they hope the midwives will help reduce Afghanistan's mortality rate.

trend will be reversed.

However, progress cannot be made without the support of family, friends and the community, Dowglass said.

She said she believes the support of the women's family members made it possible for the women to attain the knowledge necessary to provide quality health care for other women.

"Allowing your wives, daughters, sisters and granddaughters to leave the community to train as a midwife takes courage and confidence," she said.

Supporting that woman for 18 months while she studies and learns takes faith and commitment, she added.

When the training is complete, the women are expected to return to perform an important service for the province.

Welcoming back that skillful, useful member of the community brings pride and honor, Dowglass said. The new midwives will carry that pride and honor with them as they embrace the position their recently acquired skills have given them.

"They will be a resource to women ... to teach them how to take care of their newborn child; teach them about breastfeeding, common childhood illnesses, nutrition and hygiene," Mowji said.

It is hoped that the women's knowledge will help reduce the mortality rate of Bamiyan's women.

"When they save lives, when they greet happy, healthy children they have delivered, you will be happy I am sure," Dowglass told the family members.

DROP, from Page 6

for a follow-up visit to ensure the supplies are being distributed to the neediest people in the community.

Healee said he believes the Afghans are not the only ones benefiting from the civic-assistance mission.

"Yes, this mission has a very practical

and literal reason -- providing people with survival equipment," Healee said.

It also demonstrates to the people that the Coalition is helping ordinary Afghans, and it's not just out there hunting for bad guys, he said.

Healee said he finds personal satisfaction in the relief missions.

"I get tremendous satisfaction from seeing the people better equipped for survival," he said.

"The people are very grateful. ... They'll come up and say, 'the Coalition is great for providing this for us, thank you, thank you,' ... It leaves you feeling warm and fuzzy about your time here," he said.

Soldiers complete

Troops embrace role as defe

By Army Spc. James Tamez
19th Public Affairs Detachment

KABUL, Afghanistan -- The Afghanistan National Army held its 48th graduation ceremony at the Kabul Military Training Center here March 15, as 227 Afghan soldiers completed basic and noncommissioned officer training.

This graduating class was trained by Afghan drill sergeants under the supervision of Coalition forces.

"The graduation of the Afghanistan National Army is just like building a wall," said ANA Col. Mohammad Amin, chief of the center's training and education. "When we place each stone on each other, we get a strong wall."

Amin said the recruits go through one week of in-processing and 14 weeks of tough training to get to graduation. The first six weeks are basic training, then six weeks of advanced individual

training and a two-week combat-training exercise. Soldiers chosen to go through the drill sergeant course for some of the week drill sergeant course for some of the top of their class.

Mohammad Amir, an ANA Soldier who completed the drill sergeants course, said the course was both challenging and worthwhile.

"We have studied for four weeks and now we have graduated," Amir said. "What I have learned from this course, I will try my best to pass on to the rest of the soldiers."

Amir said the drill sergeant course was physically challenging and very effective. In large part, the Coalition mentors supervised the training.

"Everybody plays a part, and it all comes together like a big puzzle," said Army Sgt. Nathan Schumann, drill sergeant for the class.



Members of Kandak 48's graduating class stand in formation before the graduation ceremony March 15.



Afghan soldiers from Kandak 49 participate in a training exercise March 15. The exercise is designed to build teamwork and physical endurance.



Afghan soldiers from Kandak 48 march in formation during the pass and revue portion of their graduation ceremony March 15.

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Battalion. 377th Regiment, 95th Division (Institutional Training). "It is only a four-week school, and they come a very long way. If you'd seen them from Day 1 till now, there is a huge difference."

Amir said he learned many things throughout his training. However, he said there is one thing his Coalition mentors taught him that is more important than anything else.

That one thing is discipline. Amir said throughout the different courses, he saw the importance of discipline in a soldier's daily life and how everybody emphasized its importance.

"Since the four years that I have been working here with the army, the American military personnel that come here train well," Amin said. "They do their best in order to build a good and strong army in Afghanistan. The Afghanistan National Army is getting stronger day by day."



Army Sgt. Maj. Ronald Coles awards the drill sergeant tab to an Afghan National Army noncommissioned officer March 15. Coles is assigned to Detachment 8, 95th Division Mobile Training Team.



An Afghan boy copies English words from the board in a classroom in Bamiyan Province. The classes are taught by members of the Bamiyan Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Afghans take steps to improve literacy, future

**By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry
19th Public Affairs Detachment**

BAMIYAN, Afghanistan

-- The New Zealand-run Bamiyan Provincial Reconstruction Team here is taking steps to ensure a brighter future for Bamiyan Province by providing English lessons for the province's youth.

"Our mission in the PRT is to provide security, but it's also to reconstruct and that means reconstructing the education system," said New Zealand Army Capt. Sally Homer, public affairs officer and education and welfare officer for the PRT.

Teaching is one way the PRT is helping to establish capacity within Bamiyan Province.

"These guys see learning English as a very important part of their future," Homer said.

"So many of them want to learn English," agreed New Zealand Air Force Chaplain (Squadron Leader) Russ Horton.

The students attend these classes on their own time, he added.

Homer holds a class for both junior and senior students. Junior students are school-age boys and girls, as well as teenage girls. The senior students are

male only and are teenagers and young adults. Horton is in charge of two groups of senior students.

The number of students varies, but at times Homer said she has had up to 60 people in her class.

"We don't have set curriculum because it's an informal class," Homer said. "With my juniors, I focus on common words and phrases they would normally use."

Homer also concentrates on pronunciation and written work with her junior students.

"(For) the seniors, we have three classes a week. ... One class is conversational English, one is reading, and one is

writing," Homer said.

Homer said she is impressed with the abilities of her students.

"They are very well-behaved, very bright students who pick things up quickly," Homer said.

The English lessons have proven to be beneficial to everyone involved.

"For all of them, just like students anywhere, they have their hopes and dreams. ... They want careers, and they know English is an international language, so it's good for them to learn," Homer said.

Homer said she is optimistic her students' dreams are attainable.

"I know they'll work toward them, but I hope there are enough infrastructure in their country for them to be the doctors that they want to be, or the engineers ... or the teachers," she said.

Homer's students may very well find their dreams coming true because the people of Bamiyan are enthusiastic about the education of their youth.

"One of the things I've found encouraging about Bamiyan Province is that both the government and the ordinary people really believe in education," Homer said.

They believe in education for both boys and girls because they know it's the way of the future, she said.



Afghan girls pay close attention during English classes taught by members of the Bamiyan Provincial Reconstruction Team.

High demand for new Army gear prompts policy change

By Army Pfc.
Anna K. Perry

**19th Public Affairs Detachment
BAGRAM AIRFIELD,
Afghanistan** -- Providing deployed service members with uniforms and equipment is no easy task. People here-work every day to overcome challenges and ensure that troops are squared away and ready to fight.

One challenge recently caused officials in the Rapid Field Initiative and Action Combat Uniform Fielding for Afghanistan Joint Operations Area to modify their policies by make initial issue of ACU and RFI gear available only to Soldiers. Though, Sailors can be eligible for RFI gear, which includes fleece, boots, ballistic glasses, gloves, helmets, and knee and elbow pads, requests for issue must be approved by

their theater representative.

"We were receiving large requests from the other services," said Army Lt. Col. John Cisney, Logistics Combat Uniform Fielding chief.

"Providing them with issue would take away from Soldiers."

Even Soldiers must meet certain requirements before receiving initial issue.

"As long as Soldiers are deployed for 180 days or more they're eligible for ACUs," Washington said.

If Soldiers are deployed for 30 days or more, they're eligible for RFI, he added.

In addition, Soldiers had to have arrived in country after Oct. 1, 2005.

However, exceptions may be made on an individual case by case basis, Washington said.

Although the ACU and RFI

fielding office does not provide them with initial issue, the other military branches have ways of obtaining uniforms and gear.

"The ACUs are available for purchase by Airmen and Sailors," Cisney said. "It's not that we don't want other services to have them ... we only have funding for the Army."

Additionally, all military branches receive funds for their own clothing, so units can pay for initial issue ACUs as long as they're attached to an Army unit, said Army Lt. Col. Barry Washington, officer in charge of RFI and ACU Fielding for Afghanistan Joint Operations.

The organization is willing to provide service members with uniforms if given the proper resources.

"If someone gives us the



New boots are just part of the Rapid Field Initiative items in high demand.

funding, we're willing to step out there and take care of everybody. Until then, we have to hold the line," Cisney said.

For more information, call 231-3449.

(Army Pfc. Micheal J. Nyeste contributed information for this article.)



Army Sgt. 1st Class Jonathon Pio examines a newly issued glove to ensure a snug fit. Pio is an intelligence analyst assigned to the International Security Assistance Force headquarters.



Army Spc. Jose Cervantes examines a boot to ensure a comfortable fit while Army Sgt. Shawn Benitez asks a worker a question about his new boot. Both Soldiers are with the International Security Assistance Force headquarters.



Photos by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

New Zealand Army Pvt. Roy Mclean fires his weapon during a live-fire exercise March 18 in Bamiyan Province. Mclean is a member of the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment's quick reaction force.

Frequent training prepares soldiers for worst

By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry
19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAMIYAN, Afghanistan -- Soldiers from the Bamiyan Provincial Reconstruction Team put the old adage 'practice makes perfect' into effect as they sent rounds down range March 18 preparing for an upcoming mission.

The training was nothing new for the New Zealanders. They frequently rehearse a variety of combat scenarios to hone their warfighting skills, said New Zealand Army Lt. Jason Tinsley, security platoon commander, 1st Battalion.

The team needs to be driven to the pick-up and drop-off points of a foot patrol. They needed to run through dismounted vehicle drills in case they come into contact with enemy fire, Tinsley said.

"We went through our actions on contact, which was basically for the vehicles to move away to allow us to fight back," Tinsley said.

The day's training was not unusual for Tinsley's soldiers. The team conducts live-fire training once or twice a week.

"We need to train for the initial action, so as soon as contact happens, the guys know exactly what they do. ...

It just goes instinctively," Tinsley said.

There's no point in them being hesitant because they don't know how to react. They do lots of firing themselves to get used to it, he added.

Although the day's training revolved around getting out of a vehicle, the team also rehearsed countervehicle ambushes, escaping from destroyed vehicles, casualty extraction and retrieval of casualties from another vehicle.

"We conduct mainly vehicle patrols, so most of our rehearsals are orientated around vehicles," Tinsley said.

Tinsley said he believes the training has given his men a high level of confidence.

"Our training prepares us for the worst. We don't have much in the way of contacts in this area; however, we always train for the worst-case scenario, and that involves sending lots of bullets down range," Tinsley said.

"This training is always important because it lets us know what works well and what doesn't," said New Zealand Army Lance Cpl. Steven Marsden, a rifleman assigned to the 1st Battalion.

The frequent rehearsing is expected to help bring everyone home safely.

It is beneficial to the group. Each per-

son has a role to fulfill. Even driving isn't simple in a hostile environment, Marsden said.

"The more this training is conducted, the more our Soldiers are prepared to defend themselves and their comrades," Tinsley added.



New Zealand Army Lance Cpl. Steven Marsden, top, and New Zealand Army Sgt. John Jessup take up fighting positions during a live-fire exercise in Bamiyan Province on March 18.

ANA's Central Movement Agency begins operations

By Air Force Tech. Sgt. Mario Saenz

Office of Security Cooperation - Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan – The Afghan National Army's Central Movement Agency conducted their inaugural movement operations recently, delivering meals-ready-to-eat to forward operating units. This was their first self-sustained undertaking after several training deliveries in the Kabul area. This event highlights the progress the CMA has made toward total self-sufficient capability.

The CMA currently consists of 90 ANA troops and 33 new vehicles, and will mature to 890 people and 627 vehicles organized into four transportation companies. It will serve as the ANA's national transportation system and stand ready to provide vital military transportation services for the ANA across Afghanistan.

The training sessions covered basic preventive maintenance checks and services, driver responsibilities, vehicle-specific oper-

ation and safety. All CMA vehicle operators attended each class. CMA training also included professional military topics, such as mentoring junior officers, command level decision making, and the important NCO roles and responsibilities required for mission accomplishment.

ANA Sgt. 1st Class Muhammad Ali said, "The CMA needs to continue training and make sure we put the correct personnel into the correct sections. Also, we need more people and equipment to make sure we're ready for future missions."

CMA operators rotated through the intensive, formal and hands-on courses and used Kabul area cargo-movement missions as training events. They put skills learned in the classroom to use behind the wheel. ANA drivers are now driving the newly acquired 7-ton medium tactical vehicle.

The recent movement operation proves the CMA is one step closer to mission accomplishment. ANA Maj. Muhammad Esrar said, "We must keep our professional attitudes and military discipline to accomplish each future mission safely."

An enthusiastic CMA commander, ANA Col. Ghulan Rasoul, has been working with an Office of Security Cooperation – Afghanistan training team and its military transportation specialists since January. The CMA soldiers and team members have worked diligently to develop and carry out formal and hands-on instruction to prepare the CMA for its inaugural mission to support the ANA.

Rasoul and his team of officers, noncommissioned officers and soldiers said they are eager to begin independent operations and are enthusiastic about the future.

"The Afghan people are ready to see their Army providing supplies to the ANA units. I feel comfortable with our current soldiers' capabilities and am excited to continue the training for the missions to come," Rasoul said, and added, "Soon we will provide the nationwide services currently provided by commercial contractors."



Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Mario Saenz

Afghan National Army Cpl. Ebrahim guides a medium tactical vehicle at the ANA's Central Movement Agency headquarters in Kabul. The CMA began conducting independent operations recently.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Army Sgt. Bobby Garmon holds a flashlight while Army Staff Sgt. David Rupp inspects a trailer attached to tactical vehicle while conducting a routine checkpoint mission. Both Soldiers are assigned to the 561st Military Police Company.

Photo by Army Pfc. Micheal J. Nyeste
19th Public Affairs Detachment

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.af.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.



Marines conduct search mission

Explosives destroyed, terrorists killed, suspects captured

By Marine Sgt. Joe Lindsay
Marine Corps Base Hawaii

SALAR BAN, Afghanistan -- Marines from C Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay recently spent 15 days conducting operations in the Shurvak Valley of Kunar Province in eastern Afghanistan, along the Pech River and in the hostile area between Nangalam and Asadabad.

During their time in the field, the company engaged in numerous firefights with the enemy and detained 11 suspected terrorists, said Marine Capt. Jared Spurlock, C Company commander.

The most significant of these battles occurred near the remote mountain village of Salar Ban in the Shuryak Valley, Spurlock said.

"During our search of a home in Salar Ban, we discovered roughly 1,000 pounds of explosives and an additional 1,000 pounds of time fuses and other accessories used to detonate explosives," Spurlock said.

Minutes after finding the explosives, the Marines found themselves under attack.

"I saw a back-blast from an RPG (rocket propelled grenade) and saw the RPG headed straight for us," said Marine Lance Cpl. Brandon Benz-Marrs, 3rd Platoon, C Company, 1/3.

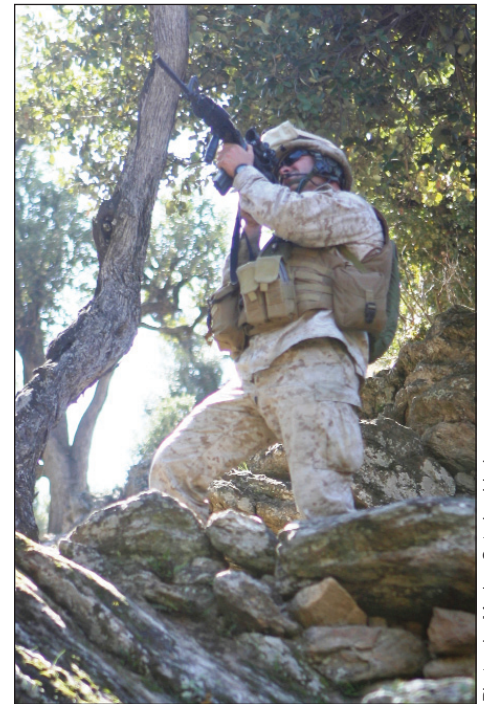
"I dived down and thought, 'This is it. We're dead.' Then, somehow, it ended up landing about 15 meters from us. None of us were hit. We didn't have time to count our luck. We immediately started sending rounds down range," he said.

The Marines battled the enemy for more than 30 minutes.

In the end, Spurlock said, reports estimated that about 20 insurgents were killed in the firefight and in the artillery bombardment and air support that followed.

"Our mission on this company operation was simple -- to close with and destroy the enemy, Spurlock said.

"The Shuryak Valley is a known enemy stronghold in our area of operations. We knew the enemy was out there, we just didn't know exactly where," he said.



Photos by Marine Sgt. Joe Lindsay

Marine Gunnery Sgt. Paul Davis aims in on suspected insurgents during operations in the Shuryak Valley of Kunar Province. Davis is assigned to C Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.



(Above) A machine gunner with C Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, scours the outlying area for insurgents after a firefight with the enemy near the remote mountain village of Salar Ban in the Shuryak Valley of Kunar Province in eastern Afghanistan.

(Left) Marine Lance Cpl. Brandon Benz-Marrs tosses a bag of fuses into a fire. The fire was created to destroy explosive paraphernalia found in a suspected insurgent safe house in the Shuryak Valley. Benz-Marrs is attached to 3rd Platoon, C Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.



Photos by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

Members of the Bamiyan Provincial Reconstruction Team dance during a powhiri ceremony in Bamiyan Province on March 23. The ceremony was held to welcome visiting Coalition officials.



Royal New Zealand Navy Petty Officer Henry Abraham touches noses with Army Brig. Gen. Anthony Tata during a ceremony March 23. Abraham is assigned to the Bamiyan Provincial Reconstruction Team. Tata is with the 10th Mountain Division.

Visitors to Bamiyan get New Zealand welcome

By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry
19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Service members from the Bamiyan Provincial Reconstruction Team perform a "powhiri," or welcome ceremony in the Maori language, for visiting members of the Coalition, including Brig. Gen. Anthony Tata, deputy commanding general for support, 10th Mountain Division. The performers celebrated the arrival of their Coalition friends to the Bamiyan Province March 23 by sharing customs and traditions from New Zealand. After the presentation, which involved singing and dancing, the New Zealanders and their new friends touched noses to cement their bond.



New Zealand Army Capt. Neville Mosley puts on his war face during a powhiri welcome ceremony in Bamiyan Province on March 23. The ceremony was held to welcome visiting Coalition officials and share New Zealand culture.



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“You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.”

-- Dale Carnegie